

The Month of Ramadān

How To Accrue Maximum Benefit

The month of Ramadān is a month in which Allah's ﷻ Mercy rains down upon the Ummah, by which they are able to secure forgiveness and salvation. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

May a man upon whom Ramadān enters and then passes, before he is forgiven, be humiliated. [Al-Tirmidhī, # 3545]

It is only those who are truly negligent and deliberately strive to disobey Allah ﷻ that are deprived of mercy in this month. When every good deed is multiplied 70 fold all that is required is a little practice and abstinence from sin.

ABSTAINING FROM SIN IS ESSENTIAL

A person once asked Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ whether doing abundant good with little sin was better or doing little good with no sin?" Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ replied, "Little good with no sin." [Kitāb al-Zuhd of Ibn Mubārak] Doing good while still continuing with sin is akin to taking medicine with a little poison at the same time. Eventually the poison will overpower the effects of the medicine, leading to your death.

FOUR ACTS TO EXERT ONESELF UPON

The scholars have prescribed four acts—in addition to the compulsory fast—to engage in abundantly in this month of Ramadān, in order to reap maximum benefit from this month. The four acts one should exert oneself in are:

1. Recitation of the Qur'ān,
2. recitation of Durūd,
3. reciting Istighfār,
4. and performance of Tarāwih.

1. RECITATION OF THE QUR'ĀN

Ramadān is the month of the Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ states:

The month of Ramadān [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'ān, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. [Sūrah al-Baqarah: 185]

Such has Allah elevated the recitation of the noble Qur'ān that for each letter one recites 10 rewards are accrued. [Al-Tirmidhī, # 2910]

In Ramadān deeds are multiplied 70 fold; thus, when the letters **الم** would ordinarily warrant 30 rewards, in the month of Ramadān it warrants 2100 rewards as a minimum, for verily Allah has no limit to the reward he confers upon his servants.

And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is All Encompassing and All Knowing. [Sūrah al-Baqarah: 261]

2. RECITATION OF DURŪD

The reward for sending Durūd upon our beloved Master Muhammad ﷺ is described in a Hadith:

He who sends blessings on me once, Allah will send ten blessings on him. [Muslim, # 408]

When this is the usual reward for Durūd, the reward and benefits it yields in Ramadān is impossible to imagine. May Allah grant us the ability to send abundant Durūd upon the Prophet ﷺ. A few other benefits of Durūd which have been described in various ahadīth:

- One's sins are forgiven,
- A person's status is raised,
- It is more virtuous than freeing a slave,
- A person will attain salvation on the day of Qiyāmah,
- The Prophet ﷺ will testify in his favour,
- One will be in the shade of Allah's Throne on the Day of Qiyāmah,
- His thirst will be quenched from the Pond of Kawthar on the Day of Qiyāmah,
- He will be granted freedom from Jahannam,
- He will cross the Bridge of Sirāt with ease,
- And it is the easiest way of earning the pleasure of Allah and to achieve forgiveness for sins. [Al-Qawl al-Badī']



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3. RECITING ISTIGHFĀR

Ramadān is a month of forgiveness. The Prophet ﷺ said:

Verily, when the servant commits a sin, a black mark appears upon his heart. If he abandons the sin, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart will be polished. If he returns to the sin, the blackness will be increased until it overcomes his heart. It is the covering that Allah has mentioned: No, rather a stain is over their hearts from what they have earned. [Al-Tirmidhī, 3334]

Some spots might be deeply ingrained and require a little more effort to remove; Istighfār is the way to clean those stains out. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

Verily, in the body is a piece of flesh which, if sound, the entire body is sound, and if corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart. [Bukhārī, # 52]

4. PERFORMANCE OF TARĀWĪH

The Prophet ﷺ said:

He who stands in worship during Ramadān, with faith and hope of acquiring reward, his past sins will be forgiven. [Al-Nasā'ī, # 2202]

Tarāwīh is a salāh unique to this month and is not performed in any month of the year. Similar to how the acts of Hajj are confined to the month of Dhū al-Hijjah—and are the best acts one carry out in that month—so too is the prayer of Tarāwīh confined to the month of Ramadān. The Prophet ﷺ said:

Ramadān is the month wherein Allah has made fasting compulsory and in this month I have initiated the practice of standing at night (i.e. Tarāwīh). [Ibn Mājah, # 1328]

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrates that during Ramadān, the Prophet ﷺ came out and saw that people were performing salāh in various groups in various places of al-Masjid al-Nabawī. The Prophet ﷺ enquired:

What are these people doing?

It was said in reply:

These people do not know the entire Qur'ān by heart and Ubay ibn Ka'b is reciting. They are following him in salāh.

On this, the Prophet ﷺ said:

These people have done correctly. [Abū Dāwūd, # 1377]

The Prophet ﷺ also emphasised standing behind the Imām for the entire duration that he leads the prayer:

He who stands with the imam until he leaves, the reward of standing the entire night will be recorded for him. [Al-Tirmidhī, # 806.]

During the Khilāfah of Sayyidunā 'Umar رضى الله عنه, a single Imām was appointed to lead everyone in Tarāwīh. This continued in the khilāfah of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān رضى الله عنه as well. The scholars have written that sometimes Sayyidunā 'Alī al-Murtadā رضى الله عنه would lead the Salāh. [Al-Marwazī: Qiyām al-Layl p. 155]

In the era of Sayyidunā 'Alī al-Murtadā رضى الله عنه, Tarāwīh would be duly performed. Sayyidunā 'Alī al-Murtadā رضى الله عنه would issue guidance to his imāms and students to perform Tarāwīh, instructing them to perform twenty units during Ramadān, while Sayyidunā 'Alī رضى الله عنه personally led them in witr. [Al-Sunan al-Kubrā, 2/497]

CONCLUSION

As the saying goes:

As you sow, so shall you reap.

This is a month to exert oneself, to do as much as possible to secure the mercy and forgiveness of Allah سبحانه وتعالى. It is reported that our pious predecessors would spend 6 months preparing for the month of Ramadān and then they would spend the remaining months after Ramadān enjoying the blessings and fruits they had accrued during this month. It is narrated about the Prophet ﷺ:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to strive more in worship during Ramadān than he strove in any other time of the year; and he would devote himself more (in the worship of Allah) in the last ten nights of Ramadān than he strove in the earlier part of the month. [Riyād al-Sālihīn, Book 9, # 204]

When this was the effort of our beloved Prophet ﷺ, who had already secured the forgiveness of Allah سبحانه وتعالى, how much more effort should we be making?

May Allah سبحانه وتعالى inspire us and bless us with the ability to practice upon the advices of the Prophet ﷺ.

